

a first transceiver and a second transceiver adapted for wirelessly transmitting signals therebetween, the first transceiver being associated with the directing station and the second transceiver being associated with the portable station;

said directing station comprising:

database means for storing order fulfillment information and product location information regarding product location in the product storage space;

directing means for determining an order fulfillment path through said product storage space based upon order fulfillment information and product location information stored in said database means for the product storage space, said order fulfillment path including a sequence of person movement instructions for directing person movements between product storage locations in said product storage space for permitting an efficient assembly of products to fulfill a customer order, said directing means passing said person movement instructions to said first transceiver for transmission to said second transceiver of said portable station;

said portable station comprising:

a scanning device for scanning bar code indicia on a product, said scanning device being adapted to produce digital data signals based upon the bar code indicia scanned;

a sound receiver for receiving sounds and converting said sounds into electronic sound signals; and

a sound generator for generating audible sounds from electronic sound signals.

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23. (Added) The system of claim 22 wherein wireless signal transmissions between said first and second transceivers include

DTMF-encoded data signals and DTMF-encoded command signals and spoken command signals.

²⁴~~24~~. (Added) The system of claim ²²~~32~~ wherein said portable station additionally comprises a portable interface device for linking the components of said portable station, said interface device comprising:

- a first interface interfaced to the second transceiver of said portable station;
- a second interface interfaced to the sound receiver and the sound generator of said portable station;
- a third interface interfaced to the scanner device of said portable station;
- a detector connected to said first interface for detecting DTMF-encoded signals received by said first interface from said second transceiver; and
- an interrupter connected to said first interface for preventing DTMF-encoded signals from being transferred to said sound generator connected to said second interface, said interrupter being triggered by said detector upon detection of DTMF-encoded signals.

²⁵~~35~~. (Added) The system of claim ²²~~32~~ wherein said first and second transceivers comprise a wireless in-building communication apparatus.

²⁶~~36~~. (Added) The system of claim ²²~~32~~ wherein said portable station includes a translator for converting digital data signals from said scanner device into DTMF-encoded transfer signals for transmitting to said first transceiver, said DTMF-encoded transfer signals comprising tones representing numeric and alphabetic data components.

²⁷~~27~~. (Added) The system of claim ²²~~22~~ additionally comprising an input means for inputting information, said input means generating DTMF-encoded transfer signals and transmitting said signals to said second transceiver for transmission to said first transceiver.

²⁸~~28~~. (Added) The system of claim ²²~~22~~ wherein said portable station is adapted to be totable by a person.

²⁹~~29~~. (Added) The system of claim ²²~~22~~ additionally comprising a base station including:

voice recognition means for identifying spoken command signals received by said first transceiver from said portable station and converting said spoken command signals into predetermined computer command codes corresponding to the spoken command signals, wherein said voice recognition means transfers said predetermined computer command codes to said directing station;

voice generation means for converting predetermined computer command codes received from said directing means into corresponding electronic sound signals for producing sounds corresponding to spoken commands, wherein said voice generation means transfers said electronic sound signals to said portable station;

a first translator for translating DTMF-encoded transfer signals from said portable station into predetermined computer command codes, wherein said first translator transfers said predetermined computer command codes to said directing station; and

a computer command code database accessible by said first translator and said voice generation means for providing predetermined computer command codes.

Sub D4 → 40. (Added) A method of merchandise ordering and order fulfillment, said method comprising:
providing an order processing system comprising a central station interfaced to a telephone communication network so as to be accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a merchandise order; and
assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:
requesting from a customer a product identification of a product item and a quantity of the product item to be added to the merchandise order;
receiving a requested product identification and a requested product quantity from a customer; and
confirming the identity and quantity of the product item to be included in the merchandise order.

B! 41. (Added) The method of claim 40 wherein said confirming step includes reciting to the customer a product description and a product price of the product item corresponding to the product identification.

42. (Added) The method of claim 40 additionally comprising determining if the customer has an unfulfilled merchandise order by checking an unfulfilled merchandise orders database.

43. (Added) The method of claim 42 additionally comprising, if an unfulfilled merchandise order is present on said unfulfilled merchandise orders database, inquiring whether the customer desires a listing of the product items in the unfulfilled merchandise order, and if a positive response is received from the customer, reciting a listing of product items of the unfulfilled merchandise order.

44. (Added) The method of claim 43 additionally comprising transmitting to the customer a merchandise order transfer characteristic of the unfulfilled merchandise order to the customer.

45. (Added) The method of claim 43 additionally comprising inquiring whether the unfulfilled merchandise order is to be modified.

46. (Added) The method of claim 40 wherein said assembling step comprises comparing the requested product quantity of a product item in a merchandise order to a predetermined limit quantity established for said product item and, if the requested quantity exceeds said predetermined limit quantity, reciting the requested product quantity of the product item to the customer and requesting confirmation from the customer of the requested product quantity of the product item.

B 47. (Added) The method of claim 40 additionally comprising selecting the merchandise order transfer characteristics for effecting the transfer to the customer of the product items of the merchandise order, including choosing between the options of delivery of the product items to the customer and pickup of the product items by the customer, and picking the date and time of the transfer of the merchandise order.

48. (Added) The method of claim 40 additionally comprising inquiring whether the customer wishes to hear a recitation of product items on which there is a special offer, and if a response from the customer is positive, reciting a listing of any special offer product items.

49. (Added) The method of claim 40 wherein said system further comprises a store station linked to said central station for